

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

COLUMBIA GAS OF KENTUCKY, INC.)	
)	
<hr style="width:50%; margin-left:0"/>)	CASE NO. 10354
)	
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE)	
FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH)	
COMMISSION REGULATIONS)	

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE

On January 19, 1988, a gas leak on New Circle Road, Lexington, Kentucky, involving a high pressure meter of Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc. ("Columbia"), was reported to the Commission.

The Commission investigated the accident, the results of which are contained in a report submitted by Larry Amburgey, dated June 28, 1988. The report attached as Appendix A recommends:

1. Columbia be cited for violation of 807 KAR 5:022, Section 9(8)(c), for not providing a durable curb box or standpipe that allows ready operation for the shut-off valve for the meter at 988 New Circle Road, Lexington, Kentucky;
2. Columbia investigate all service taps from this high pressure distribution main to see if this condition exists at other locations, provide the Commission with a list of additional violations found, their addresses, and how they were abated;

3. Columbia be cited for violation of 807 KAR 5:022, Section 13(2)(b), for not providing adequate procedures in its Operation and Maintenance Plan or company procedures for inspection and accessibility of shut-off valves;

4. Columbia be penalized for violating Commission regulations and contributing to a dangerous and hazardous condition;

5. Columbia be provided with a copy of the report and be requested to respond to Recommendation No. 2 within 10 working days. „

In order to be fully informed of the events and circumstances surrounding this accident and the procedures and practices of Columbia, the Commission finds that a hearing should be held to determine if Columbia should be penalized for failure to comply with Commission regulations.

IT IS ORDERED that Columbia shall appear before the Commission on October 13, 1988, at 9:00 a.m., E.D.T., to show cause why it should not be penalized pursuant to KRS 278.990 for violating 807 KAR 5:022, Section 9(8)(c) and 807 KAR 5:022, Section 13(2)(b).

Columbia is also ORDERED to present evidence that its current procedures related to shut-off valves are reasonable under KRS 278.280.

Done at Frankfort, Kentucky, this 24th day of August, 1988.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Richard D. Hemmick
Chairman

Robert M. Davis
Vice Chairman

James N. Williams, Jr.
Commissioner

ATTEST:

Executive Director

APPENDIX "A"
COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

INCIDENT REPORT

Columbia Gas of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky

June 28, 1988

BRIEF

On January 19, 1988, a third party gas leak was reported at 988 New Circle Road at approximately 3:30 p.m. across from Paul Miller Ford. This leak occurred when a U-Haul truck hit a high pressure meter set and broke the line between the tap and the shut-off valve located on the meter riser.

Because a shut-off valve at the tap was inaccessible due to blacktop covering the valve, gas from the Grade 1 leak continued to escape for one hour and ten minutes in a Class 3 area. Deficiencies will be discussed later in this report.

INVESTIGATION

A U-Haul truck driven by Bryan Getty hit a high pressure meter set in front of Continental Baking Company on New Circle Road, N.E., directly across from Paul Miller Ford on Tuesday afternoon, January 19, 1988. This accident was reported to Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc., (CGK) at 3:30 p.m.; gas company personnel arrived at the site at 3:35 p.m. Gas was shut off at a valve located near the main at 4:45 p.m. The Kentucky Public Service Commission (KPSC) was properly notified of the incident within two hours. The inside loop of New Circle Road was closed for more than one hour due to danger from the escaping natural gas.

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When the truck hit the high pressure tap, it broke the pipe between the shut-off valve near the main and the stopcock located on the meter set. The shut-off valve near the main was not readily accessible because it was located under blacktop. A backhoe was brought to the site to uncover the shut-off valve, resulting in allowing a dangerous condition to exist in a Class 3 area for one hour and ten minutes. Due to danger of escaping gas from the Grade 1 leak, persons in the bakery were evacuated, in addition to closing the road during rush hour traffic.

CGK did not provide a durable curb box or standpipe that allowed ready operation of the valve as required by 807 KAR 5:022, Section 9(8)(c). KPSC regulation 807 KAR 5:022, Section 9(17)(a)(1) gives the option of excluding the curb box and curb stop if the meter installation is provided with a stopcock and the connection to the distribution main is made with a service tee with a positive shut-off device, operated with ordinary, readily available tools and the service tee is not located under pavement. This valve was under blacktop, and had been for at least 17 years according to employees of the bakery.

A curb box was installed after repair was made to the damaged pipe. While investigating this gas leak, I observed similar conditions at an adjacent meter location at the corner of New Circle Road and Pridemore Court and at three meters in a pit approximately 100 yards south of this location.

CGK does not include procedures for inspection and accessibility of shut-off valves in its written Operating and Maintenance Plan (O&M) or company procedures as required in 807 KAR 5:022, Section 13(2)(b), as it relates to 807 KAR 5:022, Section 13(7)(a).

CONCLUSION

CGK allowed a dangerous condition to exist in a highly populated area because it did not provide a durable curb box or standpipe to allow ready operation of a shut-off valve or provide adequate continuous surveillance to discover that a shut-off valve had been blacktopped over for several years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. CGK be cited for violation of 807 KAR 5:022, Section 9(8)(c), for not providing a durable curb box or standpipe that allows ready operation for the shut-off valve for the meter at 988 New Circle Road, Lexington, Kentucky.
2. CGK investigate all service taps from this high pressure distribution main to see if this condition exists at other locations, provide the KPSC with a list of additional violations found, their addresses, and how they were abated.

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3. CGK be cited for violation of 807 KAR 5:022, Section 13(2)(b), for not providing adequate procedures in its O&M Plan or company procedures for inspection and accessibility of shut-off valves.
4. CGK be penalized for violating KPSC regulations and contributing to a dangerous and hazardous condition.
5. CGK be provided with a copy of this report and be requested to respond to Recommendation No. 2 within 10 working days.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry L. Amburgey
Larry L. Amburgey
Investigator Supervisor

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